

Advocacy in Psychology

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Special Thanks

- Paul Korte, PhD, Missouri Psychological Association


Objectives

- Why engaging in advocacy is critically necessary as healthcare providers and researchers
 - Perspective of “everyday advocacy” concept
- Levels/types of advocacy
 - Clinic/Institutional/Community
 - State/National
 - Public domain
- Using advocacy work for academic promotion
- Resources!


Why Don't Psychologists Advocate? (APA)




I don't have
enough time




The official
doesn't care
what I have
to say



I don't know
what to say
(FEAR)



I'm not
aware of the
issues



No one
asked me

Why Should Psychologists Advocate?

- You are a constituent
 - Your voice matters!
- Our code of ethics demands it
 - “Psychologists are committed to increasing scientific and professional knowledge of behavior and people's understanding of themselves and others and to *the use of such knowledge to improve the condition of individuals, organizations, and society.*”
- Educate yourself
 - News media; social media
 - Legislature website
 - Professional organizations
 - APA Advocacy Washington Update (weekly email)
- Advocacy can be as much or as little time as you want
 - APA Advocacy Alerts – minutes
 - Testimony to a legislative committee – A whole day (travel, time, etc.)

Everyday Advocacy

- Advocacy has many different varieties, all are important
 - Speak up (and listen) in whatever space you are in
 - Confidence in expertise
- Psychologist skills translate well to advocacy work
 - Motivational interviewing
 - Flexible thinking, reframing narratives



My Journey

How it started...

- Loma Linda University
 - 2009
- Sarah A. Reed Children's Center
 - Internship
- Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital
 - Fellowship
- Children's Mercy Kansas City
 - 2010-2023
 - First employment
 - Weight Management Program (obesity medicine)
 - Full-time clinician
 - Division Health Equity Advisor
 - Department of Pediatrics DEI Champion
 - Professor of Pediatrics

How it's going...

- Independent Contractor
 - The Black Girl Doctor
- Society of Pediatric Psychology
 - Division Advocacy Partner with APA
 - Liaison to APA Advocacy Coordinating Committee
 - Co-leader of Bravemakers, social justice affinity group
- Missouri Psychological Association
 - Elected Diversity Board Chair
 - Appointed Federal Advocacy Coordinator
 - Appointed Legislative Chair

Clinician to Advocate



Dated: December 1, 2014

*I believe obesity isn't just a problem. It's a disease that warrants serious evidence-based treatments, nutritional and physical activity guidance, intensive behavioral counseling, drug therapy and surgery. I agree to learn more and help more.
I treat obesity seriously.*

- Clinic
 - Listening to the lived experiences of patients
 - Speaking up to team members about individual patients
- Institutional
 - Teaching about weight bias, weight-based discrimination, bias, cultural humility
 - Advocating for patient safety needs
 - Chairing Equity and Diversity Council
 - Developing Division Diversity workgroup
 - Collaborating with Government Relations
- Local Community
 - Advocacy with insurers
 - Poor People's Campaign
 - Civil disobedience training
 - Letter to the Editor



Clinician to Advocate

- State
 - Testified at a special hearing for the Mental Health Subcommittee under the Health and Mental Health Policy Committee in the Missouri House of Representatives
 - Represented institution in coordination with Missouri Hospital Association and Missouri Psychological Association
 - Legislative Chair for Missouri Psychological Association
 - Work with lobbyists/CEO, creating committee
 - Policy briefs, coalition building, running Legislative Day, motivating and training membership
 - Working with legislator for telehealth and obesity bills
 - Testifying, both written and verbal
- National
 - ObesityWeek 2017 trip to Capitol Hill
 - Just had to show up and get trained on the spot
 - American Psychological Association Advocacy Summits
 - Virtual
 - In person
 - Advocating for red state advocacy needs—MO is not DC or CA...
- International
 - SPP/EPPN seminar on leadership and advocacy

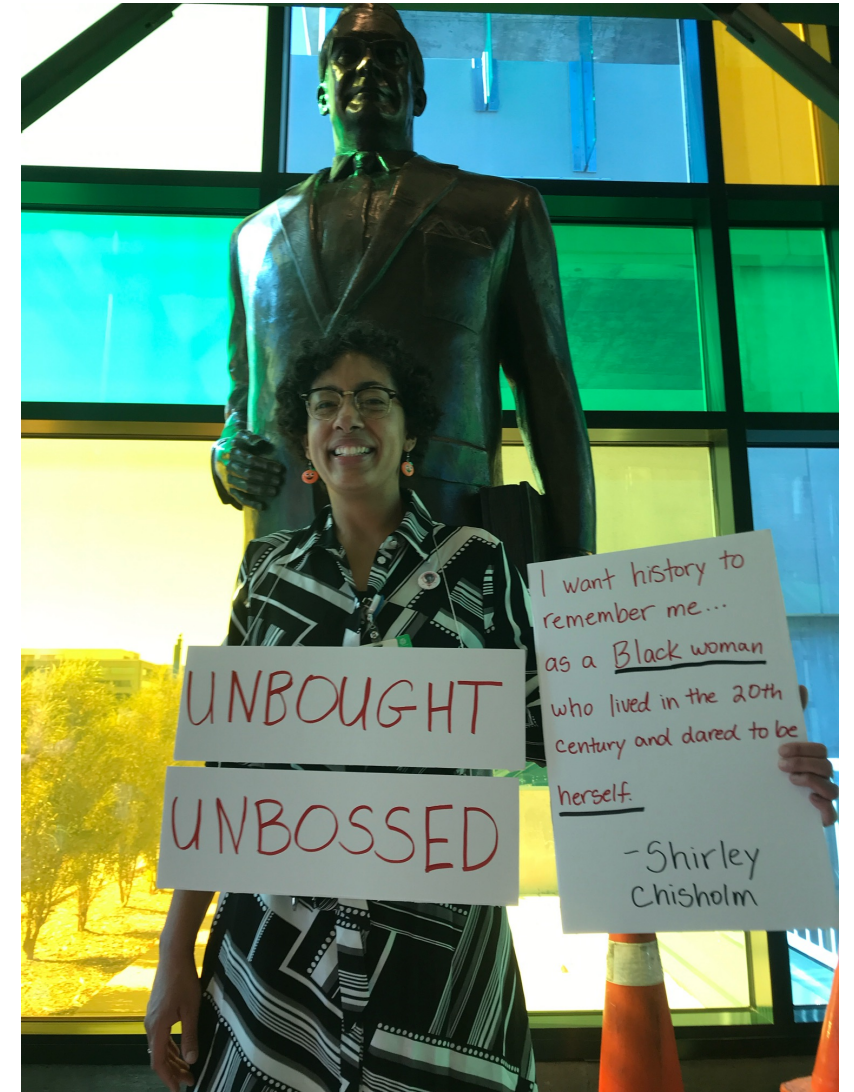


Narrative Matters

- Storytelling is essential to any message
 - [“Nobody ever marched on Washington because of a pie chart”](#)
 - Data and story support each other
- Think about your favorite compelling non-fiction media (e.g. documentary, podcast)
 - What story do you remember?
 - Did it change your mind or deepen your conviction?
 - Did you tell your friends about what you heard?
- [Troy Library: Book Burning Party - YouTube](#)



Clinic/Institutional Advocacy



I want history to
remember me...
as a Black woman
who lived in the 20th
century and dared to be
herself.
-Shirley
Chisholm

Institutional Advocacy

- Encourage the widespread involvement of psychologists throughout the institution
 - Network with others outside of psychology
 - Volunteer for institutional committees and leadership opportunities
- Create an “elevator pitch” for psychology
 - Positive impact of how psychologist skills/knowledge can help the organization
- Understand how the moving parts of the institution fit together
- If you can’t change or prevent a policy, help shape it

Community Advocacy



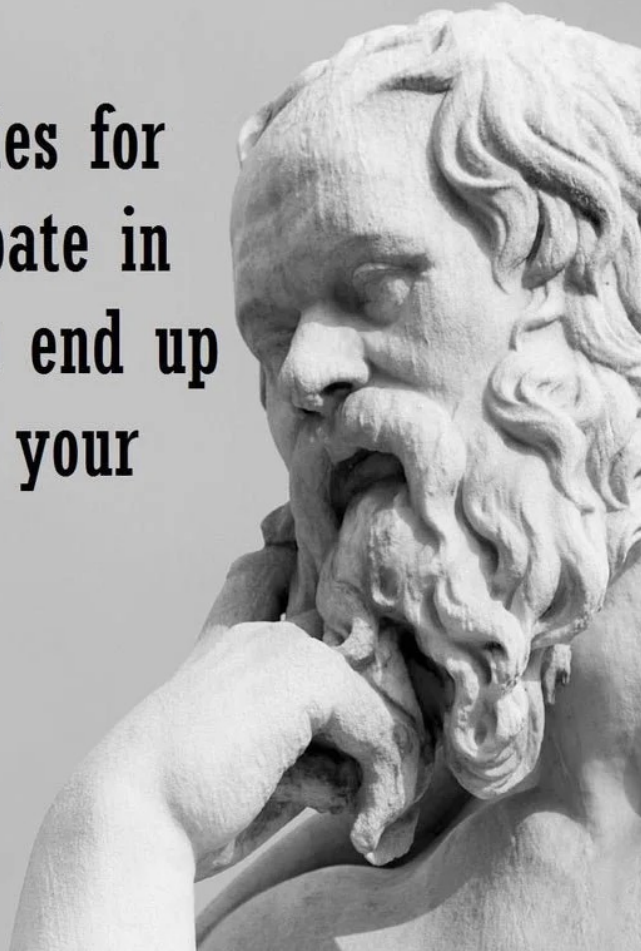
Community Advocacy

- Develop a community with like-minded groups/coalitions
 - Strength in numbers
 - Additional expertise outside of your own group
- Support their areas of interest
 - Engage in public events
 - Donate to their cause
 - Become a member of their organization
- Offer your knowledge to them
 - Present at their conferences
 - Provide consultation to their staff

Legislative/Public Policy Advocacy

"One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors." -Plato

fb.com/WorldBestQuotes



Legislative/Public Policy Advocacy

- Vote! Every time!
- Call/email your elected officials to voice your opinion
- Be prepared and get to the point
 - 3 minutes, 1-page letter
 - You are one of many individuals/groups advocating for many issues
- Advocate for the impact on the constituent population, not special interest groups



Legislative/Public Policy Advocacy

- Advocating on existing proposals
 - Respond to public comment periods (e.g. CMS proposed rules)
 - Testimony
- Advocating for new/different policy
 - Work with legislators who have a shared or related interest
 - Shared interests and/or constituents have the most influence with an individual legislator



Legislative/Public Policy Advocacy

- Policy Briefs
 - 1-2 page summaries of an issue, recommendations for change, and impact of changes on the target issue
 - Share with legislators, stakeholders, etc.
- [Wong et al., 2017](#)
 - Step 1: Define the problem
 - Step 2: State the policy
 - Step 3: Make your case
 - Step 4: Discuss the impact



For additional information, contact:
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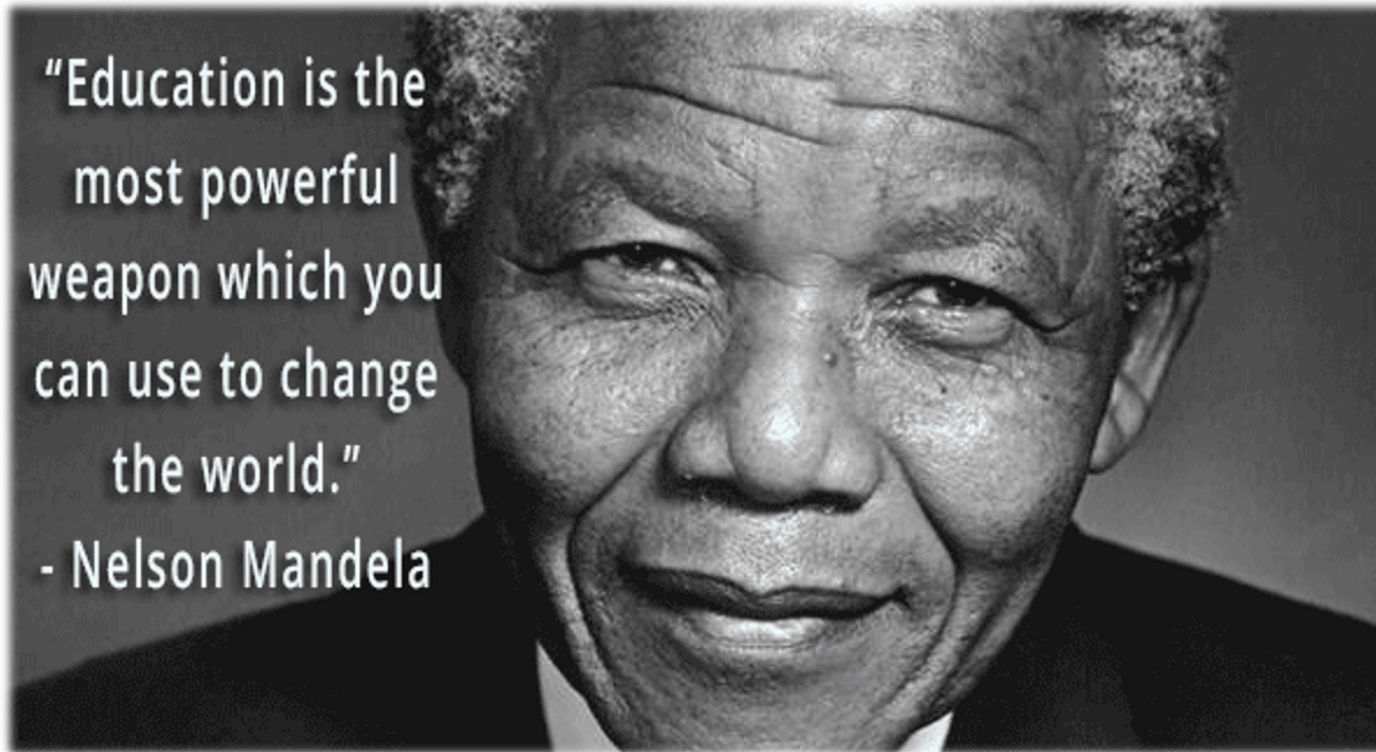
UPDATED: MARCH 2022

Enable Effective Enforcement of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

In the absence of consequences, health insurers and plans are failing to comply with crucial insurance parity requirements.

Enactment of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) in 2008 promised to end insurance discrimination against individuals with mental health and substance use disorders by prohibiting health plans from setting more restrictive limits on mental health and substance use disorder coverage than are applied to medical/surgical care. Unfortunately, more than a decade later, insurers are continuing to discriminate against individuals in need of mental health and substance use treatment. Congress must act to stop this practice by giving the Department of Labor (DOL) the authority to assess penalties for violations of the parity law, and by supporting state regulators in their enforcement work.

Advocacy with the Public

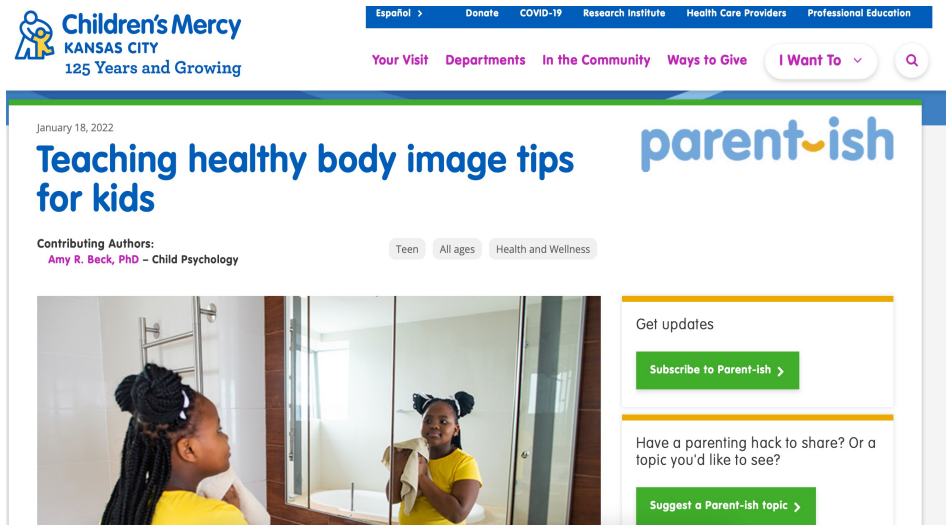


Advocacy with the Public

- Know your audience!
- Use lay language, not psychological or scientific jargon

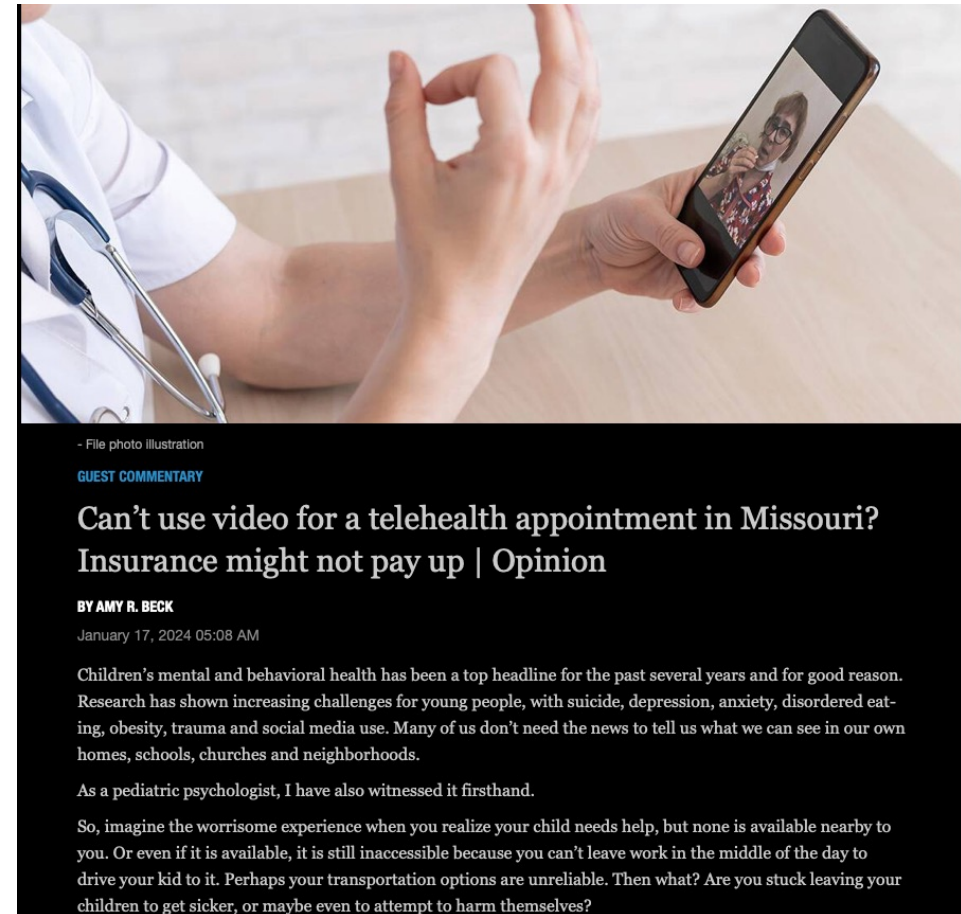
The weight loss industry is lucrative, and to make that money, its messages are everywhere. It's hard to look anywhere without seeing recommendations about weight loss, the perfect look and ways to achieve your dream body. For kids (and adults), those messages can have a serious impact on body image. It's important for parents to recognize and understand these pressures and help kids to have a healthy body image. Here are a few ways to help.

1. **Model positive body image.** One of the best ways for kids to learn to love their bodies is by you loving yours. That can be both through words to yourself and actions. Kids will often see and hear what you are doing, and learn from you, even when you think they aren't looking or listening.
2. **Eat a nutritious variety of foods.** We know through research that diets don't work, and in fact, often backfire and cause more harm, such as increased weight and disordered eating. So, instead, we want to teach kids their body needs fuel to do things like think, play, grow, be strong and feel good. And to fuel the body, we should feed it different kinds of fruits, vegetables, grains and proteins. Parents, please remember that no food is "good" or "bad," it's all just food. Different foods do different things in our bodies—that's it.
3. **Treat bodies to regular movement.** Moving and exercising in whatever way feels good and is enjoyable helps maintain that habit over time. Regular exercise



Advocacy with the Public

- Opinion Editorials (Op-Ed); Letters to the Editor
 - Timely
 - Address an issue that is of current relevance
 - Present your point upfront
 - A single anecdote can help capture the issue
 - No more than 3 points
 - With evidence to support the argument
 - Address anticipated opposition
 - Positive, non-attacking
 - Conclusion to reiterate your point



Advocacy with the Public

- Traditional media
 - Most access to local, small-market/targeted media
 - Reaches stakeholders, advocacy groups, legislators, public
 - Print/online (newspapers, magazines)
 - Radio
 - Television
- Social media
 - Your friends/family are your most captive audience
- Journals that issue press releases, special issues
- Community/coalition partners
 - Patient advocacy groups



Academic Promotion

- Advocacy work can be used for academic promotion
- Promotion is demonstration of excellence and contribution to the institution and profession
 - Rather than purely carrying out job responsibilities
- Advocacy typically counts as service
 - State/regional and national levels
- Publishing advocacy topics/work



The screenshot shows a news article on the Children's Mercy Kansas City website. The header includes the organization's logo, 'The Scope' section, a user greeting 'Welcome, Amy', and navigation links like 'About Us', 'Careers', 'Recognition', 'Ideas', and 'Give'. A blue navigation bar contains links for 'MY LINKS', 'NEWS', 'EVENTS', 'POLICIES', 'myHR', 'CM WELL', 'EDUCATION', 'RESEARCH', 'DIRECTORY', 'TOOLS & APPS', 'FORMS', and a search bar. The article headline is 'Drs. Amy Beck and Bridgette L. Jones make history'. Below the headline, it says 'Today at 5:00 a.m.', '74 Comments', '112 Likes', and a 'LIKED' button. The article text describes a significant milestone where Dr. Amy Beck and Dr. Bridgette L. Jones became the first Black women to achieve the rank of full professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. It also mentions four other Black male CM faculty members who have become full professors. A quote from Dr. Beck is included, discussing the intersection of discrimination and the need for health equity. Two portrait photos of Dr. Beck and Dr. Jones are shown on the right side of the article.

Children's Mercy KANSAS CITY | The Scope
125 Years and Growing

Welcome, Amy
About Us Careers Recognition Ideas Give

MY LINKS NEWS EVENTS POLICIES myHR CM WELL EDUCATION RESEARCH DIRECTORY TOOLS & APPS FORMS Search Site

Drs. Amy Beck and Bridgette L. Jones make history

Today at 5:00 a.m. 74 Comments 112 Likes LIKED

Sept. 1 marked a significant milestone at Children's Mercy. It's the day Amy Beck, PhD, and Bridgette Jones, MD, MSCR, became the first Children's Mercy faculty who identify as Black women to achieve the academic rank of full professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine in CM's 125-year history. They join four Black male CM faculty members who have become full professors: Drs. Gerald Woods, Felix Okah, Ikechukwu Ekekezie and Milt Fowler.

Dr. Beck, a pediatric psychologist and the first psychologist of color at CM, joined Children's Mercy's faculty in 2010 as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2016. She is a full-time clinician and provides psychological assessment and intervention to children and adolescents in the multidisciplinary Weight Management (pediatric obesity) Program. "Obesity is a highly stigmatized and discriminated against condition that often sits at the intersection with discrimination due to poverty and race/ethnicity," she said. "We treat patients for medical and comorbid mental health factors like ADHD and depression, but we also have to treat the systems that drive the inequities that harm them. This is where my passion for health equity and advocacy came from." Her teaching and advocacy accomplishments at the national/federal level are what led to her consideration for a full professorship.

Dr. Amy Beck (left) and Dr. Bridgette L. Jones recently became the first Children's Mercy faculty who identify as Black women to achieve the academic rank of full professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine.

Addressing Structural Racism Is Critical for Ameliorating the Childhood Obesity Epidemic in Black Youth

Eleanor R. Mackey, PhD,^{1,2,i,*} E. Thomaseo Burton, PhD,^{3,4,*}

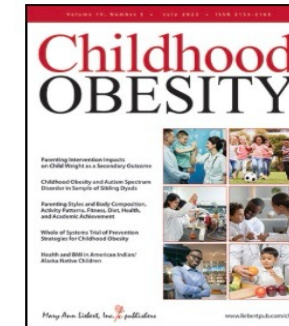
Adelle Cadieux, PsyD,^{5,6} Elizabeth Getzoff, PhD,⁷ Melissa Santos, PhD,^{8,ii}

Wendy Ward, PhD, ABPP,⁹ and Amy R. Beck, PhD^{10,11}

Announcement

Childhood Obesity

RFS Awards in Science Announced



Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., in partnership with the Rosalind Franklin Society launched a prestigious annual award to recognize outstanding published peer-reviewed research by women and underrepresented minorities in science in each of the publisher's peer-reviewed journals.

The RFS Awards in Science for *Childhood Obesity* has selected Eleanor R. Mackey, PhD, MPH and E. Thomaseo Burton, PhD, MPH, ABPP who co-authored:

Addressing Structural Racism Is Critical for Ameliorating the Childhood Obesity Epidemic in Black Youth
Eleanor R. Mackey, E. Thomaseo Burton, Adelle Cadieux, Elizabeth Getzoff, Melissa Santos, Wendy Ward, Amy R. Beck
[Read Now](#)

In Conclusion

- Psychologist skills translate well to advocacy work
 - Motivational interviewing
 - Flexible thinking, reframing narratives
 - <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/special-rise-psychologists>
- Advocacy has many different varieties, all are important
 - Speak up (and listen) in whatever space you are in
 - Confidence in expertise
- Advocacy occurs in relationship
 - No one does this alone!
 - Marathon, not a sprint
- Advocacy IS academia
- Advocacy is fun! Find your topic passion and run with it!

Resources

- APA Advocacy Office: <https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy>
- Op-Ed Project: <https://www.theopedproject.org/>
- The Goodman Center: <https://www.thegoodmancenter.com/>
- KU Community Tool Box: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coalition/main>